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Brussels, 17 September 1987

**MR DE CLERCQ DEPLORES US PROTECTIONISM IN TEXTILE SECTOR**

The US House of Representatives has adopted, by an overwhelming majority of 263 votes to 156, a Textile and Apparel Trade Act, the purpose of which is to restrict the annual growth of America's textile and clothing imports to 1 % of 1986 figures. It would apply to all countries exporting to the United States, including the European Community.

Commented Mr De Clercq : "If this legislation is approved it would jeopardize the whole existence of the Multifibre Arrangement, which regulates international textile and clothing trade and which was painstakingly renewed in GATT only last year".

"I see no need for such an act", went on Mr De Clercq, "especially as American textile and clothing exports to the Community in 1986 and 1987 have been well up on previous years, and the Community itself is taking increasing quantities of these products from the developing countries.

But if this bill becomes law, the Community would be forced to take retaliatory action against US exports. International trade as a whole would suffer. I hope the US legislature will wake up to the threat to world trade and to the United States as well.

However, I hope it will not come to this. I can only endorse the views expressed by the US Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter in his statement to the Senate on the Textile Bill : "We simply cannot charge around the world, setting trade rules with impunity. That reflects an arrogance which is unseemly and out of character for the United States. If we, nevertheless, choose to demonstrate that quality, let us recognize that it will cost us the respect of more than 90 nations who are members of the GATT".

We must hope that the Administration's wiser counsels will prevail."